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the children, all of them flies ; they are named after as many species of flies as the children can remember, Horse-fly, Dragon-fly, Day-fly, etc.

The Black Spider keeps out of sight. The Mother prepares to go out. She charges the Nurse to be very careful of her children, and not let the Black Spider get them. She then goes away.

The Black Spider now appears ; she coaxes, wheedles, and frightens the children, until she finally drags one away.

The Mother, returning, exclaims, "Where is my Day-fly?" or whatever may be the name of the child she misses.

The Nurse replies, "The Black Spider has it."

Again the mother goes out, and repeats her former caution. The same thing is repeated, until finally she comes back, and finds that all are gone, even the Nurse. She cries aloud and laments, then searches for the Black Spider. Finding her, she demands her children. The Black Spider, however, will not give them up.

At last the Spider says : "What will you give me for such a one?" naming one of the flies. The Mother offers cake, candy, money, houses, land, anything she thinks of. After a great deal of haggling a bargain is struck, and the fly purchased. This scene is repeated until all are restored, when the Mother goes off in triumph. — *Julia D. Whiting, Holyoke, Mass.*

"The Black Spider" appears to be one of the numerous forms of the game of "Old Witch," several versions of which are given in "Games and Songs of American Children" (Harper and Brothers, 1883, p. 215). The wide European diffusion and numerous variants of this sport show great antiquity. It rests on the universal belief in a race of female child-stealing demons ; a superstition as old as history, and found among the aborigines of America, as well as among civilized nations of Europe. In other games belonging to this root, flowers, birds, or articles of food are used to represent the children. — *W. W. N.*

ANIMISM AMONG THE MODOCS. — Instances of "cordial" intercommunication between persons and animals are frequently met with in the folk-lore of American and other nations, such mental exchanges being based upon the tendency to invest animals with human attributes. A remarkable story of animism was related to me by a Modoc woman in the northeastern part of the Indian Territory in 1885, which was as follows : —

"My mother, Nancy, was bitten by a copperhead snake. She had previously been in communication with a long black snake, wa'm'naksh, which acted as her tutelary genius. This black snake appeared at the lodge soon after she was bitten, for the snake not only knew what had occurred, but knew also what kind of snake had bitten her. My mother then sang a "medicine" or magic song from morning till noon ; and during these hours the black snake went to see the biter. In the evening she sang again ; the black snake returned and notified her that the copperhead had been "interviewed" and had no desire to bite, but did so only because she had stepped on it. The magic song was then followed by a vision, and the vision revealed to my mother a remedy for the bite, which cured her."

Among this people and the cognate Klamath Lake Indians the term for

magic song, shui'sh (from shui'na, *to sing*) also means "magic, miraculous remedy," "great medicine," because during its chanting the physical remedy is applied, and the singing itself is thought to exercise magic power. Thus our word *charm* is derived from Latin *carmen*, which means *song* as well as *incantation*, and the Greek ἐπεδή, *incantation*, really means "what is or has been sung upon or over a (sick person)."

Somewhat analogous to the above is the fact, that some southern tribes, *e. g.* the Creeks of our days, call the rattlesnake the *chief of snakes*, tchi'tu mi'ko, which recalls to mind the mediæval basilisk, viz., "the snake with the royal crown." James Adair in his "History of the Indians" (1775) has left an interesting passage on this subject (pp. 237, 238), and shows to which qualities that dreaded reptile owes its royal dignity in the mind of primitive man: "The color of the rattlesnake seems to change by every different position the spectator may view it in; . . . for in each of their heads there is a large carbuncle, which not only repels, but (they affirm) sullies the meridian beams of the sun. They reckon it dangerous to disturb these creatures . . . they call them and all of the rattlesnake kind 'kings' or 'chieftains of the snakes;' and they allow one such to every different species of the brute creation . . . the Cherakees fancy the killing of them would expose them to the danger of being bit by the other inferior species of that serpentine tribe, who *love* their *chieftains* and know by instinct those who maliciously killed them, as they fight only in their own defence, and that of their young ones, never biting those who do not disturb them. They do *not* *deify* them, etc." — *A. S. Gatschet*.

SNAKE ORDER OF THE MOQUIS. — In a preceding number of this Journal (Notes and Queries, vol. i. p. 162) attention was called to the necessity of collecting the traditions of the native races. It was then urged that the pressing need of the study of the religions of primitive races is not theoretic discussion, but original research. It was pointed out that the path of the student is constantly barred by lack of information, and fear was expressed that this deficiency might not be remedied until the precious opportunity had gone by. In the same number in which these views were expressed, was printed a form of the legend of the Snake Order of the Moquis, so original in form as to be calculated to excite keen curiosity. During the present year, the publication, in the Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, by Dr. Washington Matthews, U. S. A., of the "Mountain Chant" of the Navajoes (neighbors of the tribe already named) has emphasized these statements. The legendary material recorded by Dr. Matthews is so rich, its bearing on mythological and religious questions so various and important, as to emphasize the impossibility of forming any correct opinions respecting the psychology and beliefs of Indian tribes without more accurate and extended information than is yet attained. As always happens when any new source of knowledge is opened, the questions suggested are wider than the means of solution. It appears, at all events, that Indian mythology and religious practice are so closely connected with the general problems of human thought, its knowledge would throw a flood of light on the history of ideas.